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ABSTRACT

Working toward the creation of a truly equitable human society demands that school administrators (1) become aware of ways in which educational systems currently collaborate in maintaining inequitable societies and (2) work to change the structures that serve the status quo into structures that support cooperative change. One major task is to reeducate schools, teachers, and the larger society to shift their focus from "schooling" to "education." Schooling (the coercive and controlling structures that produce obedience) disempowers; it focuses on what teachers can make students do. Education, on the other hand (informing, inspiring, encouraging questions) empowers; it focuses on what students are enabled by teachers to do. Another task is to redefine "excellence" in education: to change from a failure-oriented system to a success-oriented system; to focus on a student's all-round humanity and the ability to go on learning, rather than on a limited range of skills; and to shift from summative to formative systems of evaluation. Nine specific suggestions to administrators range from curricula reform and the implementation of antiracist and antisexist policy guidelines to the invention of new, necessary words. A select bibliography is included and a paper detailing specific stategies for change is appended. (IW)

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# EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

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"You go on about nature," Tycho said, "as if it was just simple. But it's natural for people to be unnatural in some ways. We're nature red in truth and claw, AND nature read in truth and law, both at the same time".

(Margaret Mahy, The Catalogue of the Universe, p.65)

Inherent in the education systems of the western world is a belief in nature as competitive - a belief in the tooth-and-claw combat which results in the survival of the fittest, thus justifying their power over others. Might equals right. Big Brain is just a slightly more sophisticated version of Big Brawn. Certainly there is concern to ensure that the lesser minds do not suffer too much as a result of their defeat - after all, maintaining a vanquished people is a very expensive business in a society which demands that they also be lavish consumers. So it is in the interests of the economic system to ensure that the vanquished though docile remain useable. But defeated, never-the-less. Wasted.

What a wild vision of the world. How cynical - and where is the evidence, anyway?

It is, of course, an overstatement. Many people working in the education system would deny vigorously that they are social Darwinists; and many would claim, quite rightly, that they are passionately committed to truth and law, and to helping young people grow towards a future more just, more equitable, more harmonious and yet more excitingly diverse than the present.

Overstatement it may be. But unless we examine the extent to which it is true, and unveil any educational paradigms which operate to maintain wastage of human learning potential, we shall continue to have education systems which collaborate in maintaining inequitable societies. That may be, of course, what we want. But if it isn't (and there are networks of people of all nations committed to a different kind of world) we should be changing the structures which serve the status quo into structures which support cooperative change.

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Presented: 6th International Intervisitation Programme in Educational Administration.

What I have to say addresses issues of educational administration. I speak with administrators: that is, those who, along with politicians, have the power (and therefore the responsibility) in our present education systems. The issues which concern me specifically are: ways of overcoming the obvious inequality of outcomes for different groups within our various societies; ways of improving the overall quality of teaching and learning; ways of demystifying the processes of education so that those of us who work within the system become fully accountable to those with whom and for whom we work.

I believe that these issues are intertwined; that they are of vital importance to the society around us; and that we already have available the knowledge and skills to effect dramatic changes in our education systems within a relatively short period of time - say five years - if we want to. My purpose in speaking with you is, then, to try to show first what changes are necessary, and then how we as administrators should be participating in these changes.

> "It is characteristic of minds to be infinitely variable, to be able always to see and make differences, to construct laws rather than just to be subject to them'
>
> (P.S. Wilson 'Plowden Children' in Dale, Esland and McDonald, Schooling and Capitalism p.160).

My contention is that to deal with the three issues I have mentioned (overcoming inequality, improving quality, demystifying) we need to analyse and change the nature of power in the education system and in the wider educative processes of society. Basically, what I am suggesting is that the time has come for human society consciously to shift away from power as force to power as energy; to shift from a society where many individuals gain their sense of self-esteem from their ability to dominate the earth and other people, to a society where self-esteem is seen to be properly centred in the ability to nurture the environment and cooperate with other people; to shift from coercion and control to learning and love as the models of adult behaviour to which we aspire.

Such a shift is not some sort of idiot idealism, the unrealistic vision of ivory-tower theorists. Increasingly, even self-identified conservatives are perceiving this shift as essential to our survival - in business, in beaurocracies, as nations, as a species. The critical difference between now, and a hundred years ago (when, roughly speaking, state education systems were established in industrial nations) is that as a result of the remarkable success of education, we have moved globally, into a new age of human development: The Information Age. Much has been written about the significance of this epoch - but in short, the main implications for education systems are these:

1. in an age of mass communications, everyone knows what everyone else has, and can do

2. those who have not, or can not, will never be content with their lot again, and will continue to demand a more just society.

3. everyone can find out how to bend minds and make bombs - from taunt to television advertisement, from molotov cocktails to superior nuclear devices.

4. the 'haves' will either be prepared to share their privilege and take steps to ensure a more equitable society, or they will have to spend vast sums on increasing coercive devices (propaganda, police forces, armies and arsenals) to protect themselves and hang on to what they have.

5. moving towards a truly equitable human society demands more than just greater sharing of work and profits: it demands that all human beings acknowledge the full humanity of all other human beings, and delight in our diversity, and find ways of linking our differences to network energy and consciousness productively within work and community groups, and on a national and international level. That is, the development of a truly equitable society demands personal and social transformation.

6. in order to move towards a more equitable society, every citizen will be expected to learn vastly more than at present; education is the key to overcoming inequality without force; lifelong learning is the basis of personal and social transformation.

That is, either all people must be encouraged to become excellent lifelong learners, skilled participants in shaping a new social order, or many must be schooled - or forced - to accept their lot, as determined for them by a few who hold onto privilege and the means of control. Thus I believe that better education for all - both inside and outside official educational establishments - is the only alternative to either the systematic limitation and oppression of many people, or social disruption and violence on a vast scale. There is no acceptable alternative to <u>educational excellence for all</u> in the Information Age.

What, then is educational excellence? First, I wish to distinguish between <u>schooling</u> and <u>education.</u> By <u>schooling</u> I mean the coercive and controlling functions of education systems - those structures which produce obedience - such as uniforms, punishments, rote learning of unnecessary information or skills, examinations as ranking mechanisms rather than measures of achievement. By <u>education</u> I mean those functions which encourage the empowering of students, which will enable them to maintain the status quo, or fashion new futures, as they choose.

<u>Schooling</u> (compulsion, coercion, force, making students get the 'right' answers) disempowers. <u>Education</u> (informing, inspiring, encouraging students to ask all kinds of questions) empowers. Both good schooling and good education require the hard work of teachers and students. However, good schooling focuses on <u>what teachers can make students do;</u> good education focuses on <u>what students are enabled by teachers to do.</u>

> "What was happening, Ambien 1 said, was that Klorathy did not make any attempt to communicate what he thought until he was asked a direct question - or until something was said that was in fact a question though it was masked as a comment. And Ambien 1 then went to Klorathy and inquired if this was indeed a practice of Canopus; and whether Klorathy expected to stay there, living on as he did, with these savages, until they asked the right questions, and if this was Klorathy's expectation, then why did he expect the savages to ask the right questions?
>
> To which Klorathy replied that they would come and ask the necessary questions in their own good time.
>
> And why?
>
> 'Because I am here...' was Klorathy's reply, which irritated Ambien 1. Understandably. I felt irritated to the point of fury even listening to this report."
>
> (Doris Lessing, The Sirian Experiments, p.113.)

Noone would suggest that the only role of a good teacher is to wait until a student asks a question; but the relationship between the narrator Ambien II, and Klorathy, exemplifies the differences between Sirius and Canopus, and provides a wonderful example of the evolution within human consciousness from coercion to empowering.

Part of the process of necessary change is, then, a shift from schooling to education. This does not usually occur as a dramatic leap from one to the other - indeed, teachers and students and parents being a mixed bunch, everywhere, it is more in the nature of a gradual change of emphasis. One of the main tasks of educational administrators is to encourage this shift - to make public statements supporting it, and explaining why; to challenge suggestions for change to test their consistency with this shift; and to provide incentives for change to occur.

There will, of course, be many powerful opponents, because such a shift of emphasis will certainly encourage social change. Some people will oppose moves from schooling to education, from obedience to questioning, because they are afraid of losing their own power and privilege, others because they are simply afraid - of the unknown, of change itself. The only cure for fear is reassurance - through information and loving concern - that such changes are for the better. So a special responsibility for educational administrators is to develop our own clear vision of ways in which these changes could make society a better place - we must be able to articulate Utopia. That does not mean inventing fantastic landscapes of bucolic bliss, where lions and lambs gambol amicably in the soybean pastures.

> "Utopian, to my way of thinking, is not that which cannot be real, it is not idealism. Utopia is the dialectical process of denouncing and announcing - denouncing the oppressing structure and announcing the humanising structure. It is therefore a historical commitment and engagement. Utopia is an act of knowing critically."
>
> (Paulo Freire, quoted in Dale, Edland and MacDonald, Schooling and Capitalism p.225).

One aspect of 'the oppressing structure' which is particularly clear in New Zealand is the existence of unexamined contradictions between the overt, rational aims of the education system (i.e. the professed 'educational' aims) and the covert needs of our society (i.e. the often confusing emotional needs of individuals and groups, based in fear of change and desire for security in an apparently hostile world).

The main contradictions are as follows:

1. Professing a commitment to educational excellence, and continually exhorting schools to maintain high standards in a wide range of knowledge, skills and behaviours, while continuing to measure and give credit for only a very narrow range of human learning in practice, and continuing to stress those aspects of schooling which exist to encourage conformity and obedience, such as attendance, uniforms.

2. Professing belief in a democratic and egalitarian society, while maintaining ways of speaking, behaving and structuring systems which show our profound commitment to maintaining an unequal, hierarchical social order.

3. Stressing the importance of good evaluation of learning outcomes, while continuing to support a crude ranking system which uses examination methods of very limited validity and which gives little information about educational standards attained.

These contradictions exist because society is in a state of transition between the Industrial Age and the Information Age, and because we have not yet clarified the kind of society we want, or can expect, as a result of the new information technology and consequent social upheavals. Thus, it is not surprising that we are not clear about the kind of education system which will best prepare young people for the present, and for their futures.

I cannot stress too strongly the need for educational administrators to inform public debate on these issues - and for those reporting (or fomenting) public debate, journalists and editors in particular, to ensure that adequate coverage is given to the complex issues of change in education systems. Too often the public are offered simplistic slogans such as 'back to basics' or 'external exams, not internal assessment' rather than thoughtful appraisals of what is actually happening, or being proposed.

Progress towards educational excellence for all will be slow until we reach a large measure of public agreement on the meaning of educational excellence for all. What follows, then, is some comment on the issues of excellence, and equity; and suggestions on how our systems of evaluation must be changed to promote both.

> "There is a school of thought - supported by the present Government - that the educationally disadvantaged are a minority of the school population - "bottom 40% outside the target area of the examination system" - for whom separate and different educational provision should be made. We wish explicitly to disassociate ourselves from that school of thought. Firstly, it ignores the evidence set out in this paper that the majority of children underachieve, albeit in different ways. Secondly we do not accept that the designated 40% lack abilities: the over-representation of working class children, girls and black children amongst that group indicates clearly that other factors are at work. Thirdly, the thesis implicitly assumes that we are concerned with remedying deficiencies in CHILDREN when we are in fact concerned to improve our institutional arrangements. Fourthly the "bottom 40%" approach assumes that we should make separate provision - the surreptitious re-introduction of selection - and that main provision is acceptable. This is a fallacy. We should be concerned to provide a good education for girls and boys together, for black and white children together, for children of all social classes together. Experience has demonstrated that a re-examination of educational provision from the point of view of a group of children disadvantaged by it produces a perspective for change and improvement of educational benefit to all the children, including those who are the apparent beneficiaries of the existing system. The current examination system for example does not simply disadvantage the "bottom 40%", it is an ineffective and inadequate method of recording the achievements of the sixty per cent who in some sense survive within it. It is not simply educationally undesirable that attitudes and values of educational institutions should be based on assumptions of differential provision in relation to gender, class or ethnic origin; the quality of the education itself suffers too.
>
> (Frances Morrell, Race, Sex and Class: 1. Achievement in Schools ILEA 1983 p.5)

My challenge to educational administrators is to refuse to accept the concept of 'the bottom 40%' - a concept based on the prevailing social divisions of labour rapidly being made obsolete by the cybernetic revolution - to demand instead 'the top 100%'. Neither the German nor the English models of secondary education and tertiary training, as shown in a recent BBC documentary on Foreign Correspondent, are adequate; nothing less than excellence for all will suffice for the Information Age.

EXCELLENCE : 'Better Education.....'

The best students in our secondary schools today are outstanding young people. Each year I marvel at young women who excel in all aspects of their lives. Last year, for instance, there was Lupelele - head girl, fine sportswoman, excellent organiser, inspiring leader, conscientious student, eloquent and literate, a compassionate, charming and dignified young woman. Gabrielle - musician, actress, champion swimmer and debater, orator, extremely able scholar in the humanities, and a young woman of courage, integrity, perception, forthrightness and compassion. Bettina - debater, artist, actress, politician, activist in the Peace Group, the Labour Party, and an elected parents' representative on our governing board; sound student in sciences and arts. Monica - mathematician, scientist and linguist, top of the University Scholarship list for New Zealand in her fourth year at school; also viola player, debater (with Bettina in the team which topped the North island), with a keen social awareness and a fine sense of humour. I could name another fifty school leavers who are undeniably excellent young women- each of them with special talents and a balance of fine personal qualities, intellectual attainments, physical fitness and health.

All our schools are enabling many young people to achieve excellence. Public debate, however, legitimately continues over what constitutes excellence, and over the many students whose attainments appear mediocre or worse.

For young people to cope with the complexities of the modern world, and to make a contribution to the welfare of those around them, it is not enough for them to be lop-sidedly excellent - superb at throwing javelins or solving problems in nuclear physics or being kind to babies. All the documents on education for the future, whether from a conservative-liberal English perspective like Education 2000, or Scottish, like Educating for Tomorrow: a Lothian Perspective, or our own Education in Change, stress the need for young people to have high levels of skill in oracy and literacy, a good command of mathematics, sound knowledge of physical and social sciences, be skilled in problem-solving, lateral and creative thinking, research and field work, personal relationships, group work and nurturing skills, and have high levels of practical, technological and aesthetic experience. They must be physically fit, understand basic principles of health, hygiene, nutrition, and human development, be able to watch television critically, make sensible choices as consumers, be courteous and reliable employees, kind and helpful people, responsible and involved citizens... Truly, our society demands that young people excell at everything, or at knowing something about almost everything, at being skilled learners. Excellence, today means all-round humanity and the ability to go on learning.

And yet, what rewards does society offer for becoming an excellent person? At present, the only public acknowledgement young people ever get is getting their name in the paper if they pass University Entrance or higher exams (their social ranking on a few limited aspects of pen-and-paper, memory oriented skills), get selected for a regional or national competitive sports team, or individual artistic award, or commit a crime. Nowadays, they won't even necessarily get a job when they leave school. So what use are all the glossy documents schools produce (like the Auckland Girls' Grammar School Fifth Form Certificate), giving credit for all-round excellence, when the national evaluation system is just marks for one set of performances in one set of competitive written tests? What value does society truly place on excellence?

Consider, for instance, the impact on future development in New Zealand, if to win a university scholarship you had to have a proven record of excellence as a kind and helpful person, a creative and practical one, a physically vigorous and fit one, and be knowledgeable in at least Maori and English languages and cultures, as well as a 'good student' in the present limited sense. Or think what would happen if all students who achieved basic competence in the skills required of adults, and demonstrated responsibility for themselves and helpfulness towards others, were given a special ceremony of acceptance into adulthood, and from then on had genuine choices available between paid study and employment in various combinations.

Imagine, too, the kind of society which might develop if <u>all</u> young people were encouraged to succeed in all kinds of learning, instead of many being encouraged to fail, as at present. The public is right to be concerned about our high failure rates in public examinations, about young people of minimal literacy and numeracy, with limited skills in oral language. Society should be demanding the explanation for our commitment to mediocrity and failure.

Because there is an explanation, and it is time it was given honestly and unequivocally by the Minister, Department of Education officers, principals and teachers, staff in universities and colleges of education, to every student and parent and employer in this country.

Our education system is designed to produce people who will accept their different roles in a highly differentiated hierarchical society. Its function is to produce a few highly educated people, many partially educated, and many with very limited skills, all of whom believe that their consequent role in the industrial order is justly theirs because of 'ability' or 'effort'. What we do not tell them is that if they all worked equally hard, we would still fail the same number. What we do not tell them is that the notion of 'ability' is, at best, a hotly debated theoretical construct, and one used, very often, to justify maintaining the privilege and power of some at the expense of others.

We do not explain that the 'normal distribution curve' - upon which our national evaluation system is based - and the main paradigm shaping teachers' expectations of students' learning - is a curve of random distribution in the physical world. There is no shred of evidence that such a curve ought to be the outcome of planned education - on the contrary, the whole point of planned education should be to produce a highly skewed set of behaviour outcomes, skewed towards excellence, and away from ignorance. What's more, we do not tell them that if we wanted to, we could teach them all to be like the few who excel at present.

If we - teachers, parents, the public, politicians - want a highly educated population of young people who do excel in all areas of adult competence, we could make it happen. Benjamin Bloom and his colleagues, and all those from Weschler on who have done research on how children succeed - and fail - have demonstrated quite clearly the mechanisms we use to produce a hierarchy of learning outcomes - a hierarchy of students. There is clear documentation of how we could change from a failure-oriented to a success-oriented system - with little additional expenditure, even, after the initial retraining and national publicity exercise (see Human Characteristics and School Learning, for instance. )

However, we must be honest about why we have not implemented the principles of success-oriented education:

- if everyone is as capable as our best all-round form seven students are now, who will be content to do the really grotty jobs, or to be left unemployed?

- if young people are encouraged to be good learners - asking questions seeking answers, participating fully in a wide range of activities- and compassionate, cooperative people - will they accept, unquestioningly, the basic premises of production and consumption and unequal access to resources and power, upon which our current society is based?

If we want a better-educated population, we must also be prepared for a social revolution.

## EQUITY: '...for all'

One of the myths of our education system is that it provides equality of opportunity for all students, regardless of sex, race, or social class.

'From each according to his ability; to each according to his needs'. His for a start. And 'ability' and 'needs' are both concepts defined by the dominant group in any society - in our case, the pakeha male middle-class. If the myth were true, then educational outcomes would be spread in comparable ways through the groups male and female, Maori and Pakeha, working-class and middle-class. Patently they are not.

Consequently, there are two possible explanations: either some groups (male, pakeha...) are genetically superior to others (female, Maori...) or there are factors operating within the system to limit the development of other groups. The first explanation has been discredited. We have considerable evidence, however, on the nature of the mechanisms which operate to prevent the full utilisation of human potential in some social groups. In brief, here are some of the best known:

1. the availability of positive role models, (teachers, authority figures, images in books, posters, television and films) and the proliferation of narrow and limiting stereotypes.

   - the lack of positive and diverse role-models for Maori people, women, people of colour, the disabled, homosexual people.

2. the selective attention of teachers, and their common failure to involve all students equally in classroom activities, especially students from working-class backgrounds, black students, girls, in higher-order questions and answering, and other activities, which encourage educational success.

3. the use of sexist and racist language, 'jokes', harrassment and physical abuse.

4. overemphasis on selected attributes or activities (namely those associated with the dominant group such as rugby, warfare, abstract thought, technological manipulation), and undervaluing of others (e.g. oral-aural skills, aesthetic modes, feelings, cooperative and problem-solving activities, nurturing and relationship skills).

5. the assumption throughout the media and institutions in our society that the language and customs of the dominant group are the norm, and other cultures or social groups are quaint deviations - the cooption of dance, music, costume, visual arts, food as evidences of a spurious 'multiculturalism' while failing to implement even a basic biculturalism acknowledging the rights of the tangata whenua to language, land and water use, and political and social mores centred in profoundly different spiritual views of the world.

6. curriculum and school organisation based on a mono-cultural world view, and excluding adequate alternative provisions.

7. the continuing use of summative and norm-referenced testing to maintain hierarchies and ensure failure.

8. the perpetuation of all the above through decision-making bodies that are substantially controlled by middle-class pakeha males, who perceive needs and determine the allocation of resources in such ways as to perpetuate the status quo.

EVALUATION : 'for a better education for all'

Evaluation is the key to education. At present, our evaluation systems lock young people into the hierarchies of society. It is possible to change our evaluation system into one that unlocks - one that empowers young people and enables them to grow, change and make choices, for their futures.

The change needed is a relatively simple one - in theory. We need to move away from ranking mechanisms which mark students, but give little or no information about what has actually been learned, and towards ways of helping students to describe, honestly and accurately, what they know and can do. Instead of exercising power over students by marking their work and ranking them - teaching them their place in the social order - teachers should be helping students understand what they can learn, how to learn it, and how to know when they've learnt it. In short, evaluation throughout the school system should be seen as formative, not summative, and should be achievement based, not norm-referenced.

However, in order to make this shift, what is needed is a massive re-education of teachers to believe in the educability of all students, and to use a wide range of methods of formative assessment. The shift would also require considerable public education. Clearly the most effective way to induce these changes is to use that most effective agent of adult education, national television - followed up with regional and local seminars and workshops.

The other major change essential lies in what is evaluated, as well as how evaluation is done and used. As has been suggested in the section on Excellence and Equity it is essential that credit be given - that is, value be placed on - the whole range of valuable human learning, rather than just on the present very limited range of skills. Thus the range of evaluation techniques must be extended to include assessment of oral, practical, personal, problem-solving and creative skills.

Clearly, in a system of evaluation aimed at producing successful life-long learners rather than partially-educated obedient failures, there would be no place for 'once-off' national examinations, or fixed hurdles over which all students of a particular age are made to jump. This has always been unacceptable in athletics, music, ballet, speech examinations, and it is equally absurd for the other complex learning outcomes of school curricula. Instead, all young people should be entitled, at least once a term, to a written statement on the progress they are making - a statement prepared jointly by staff and students, and commented on by parents/guardians as well. The statement should include accurate diagnostic descriptions of attainment in learning, as well as comment on participation in all aspects of school life.

As students get older, these statements will necessarily become more complex, and in order to have a clear basis for describing achievement, it will be useful to have some national guidelines. In mathematics and languages, for instance, it is possible to have nationally set and moderated tests for some aspects of knowledge and skill-development which will define levels of achievement in mastery terms for both teachers and students. In other areas, such as the visual arts, music and technology, and first-language development, levels of achievement can best be described and moderated by panels of teachers working together with samples of students' work, as has been done very successfully in School Certificate Art and Workshop Technology already.

Instead of repeating a whole year's work, in the event of not reaching a sufficiently high standard, students should be able to resubmit work, or sit further tests, within three months, at any stage.

Acknowledging that students will reach different levels in different skills at different times, the present system of form levels - of locking students into a supposed pattern of 'normal' development - should be discontinued forthwith. In particular, at secondary school level, students should be able to work at the level they have reached regardless of age, in each subject area, and enter for any available tests at the level at which they are ready to succeed, not when they are patently going to fail. The notion of a 'Fifth Form Certificate, 'Sixth Form Certificate', 'Seventh Form Certificate' should be replaced by a national Certificate of Secondary Education which is awarded to every student completing full-time study in a secondary school, which is in the form of a booklet describing the personal, social, educational and extra-curricular attainments of the student, including the national award levels reached in those subjects or skills where national levels descriptions are appropriate. This document should be compiled by students and staff, and moderated locally by panels representing the Department of Education, students, teachers, parents, unions, and employers. Students continuing with part-time secondary education, or returning for further study as adults, would be entitled to supplementary certificates for the work completed, or, if they wished, a new certificate could be awarded if they spent at least one full-time year in a secondary school.

In addition to the National Certificate, two other documents should be widely available and thoroughly understood by the whole public. First, a booklet describing all those subjects for which content and skills are prescribed nationally, and the testing and moderation methods used for evaluating levels of achievement, together with the meaning of those levels. Secondly, a similar booklet produced by each school for its own school-based courses and assessment procedures.

The essence of a successful national evaluation system is the trust people have in its fairness and accuracy. At present the public has a firm trust in the fairness of external examinations, and a profound mistrust of 'internal assessment'. In order to change these attitudes, the public must be made aware of the limitations of the present system and the ways in which it no longer meets the needs of society. More important still, they must be shown how the new system will work, and be convinced that it is fair from school to school, and will improve standards and provide intelligible documentation The best way to ensure public acceptance is to involve the students themselves and the public in the actual administration of evaluation - that is, to demystify the system and to empower the users.

Questions about which areas of educational attainment would benefit from national moderation and which need only school-based evaluation with local and regional oversight need more detailed discussion. In England, for example, National Criteria have been produced for eleven common subjects; in Scotland, Standard Grades are considered necessary only for four: English, Mathematics, Science and Social and Vocational Education. However, neither of these countries has gone as far as I am suggesting towards building student and public involvement into the moderating procedures, which should make national testing a useful guide rather than a ritual master in the system.

NETS TO CATCH THE STARS...

"...Season succeeded on season, dark followed light
Unblinking eyes of our foremothers gazed to the future
To us their descendents, knowing their strength was sufficient
Despite betrayal for guns, death in the swamps
Bequeathing a cloak to cover us, a kete for treasures.
We are part of the pattern that must never be broken.
We must continue the weaving, even the bruised ones
Our work will fashion the nets to catch the stars."

(Trixie Te Arama Menzies, 'Harakeke', Uenuku p.13)

"Our system leaks like a seive", George Schultz, vice President of the U.S.A., is reported to have said on Sunday 29 June 1986, with reference to the suggestion that New Zealand would keep secret any refused nuclear warship visits. A seive - or a net? As I have suggested, the Information Age certainly makes it difficult to keep secrets - to maintain privileged groups by exluding others from access to knowledge - but we have a way to go yet in our education systems before we are enabling young people to 'fashion the nets to catch the stars'.

> "I want to know what you think of us", she said shortly, "what you really think." He did not hesitate for a moment. "All right. I think it's amazing that you've done as well as you have. You've got hardly any theory of social organisation, astonishingly backward economic systems, no grasp of the machinery of historical prediction, and very little knowledge about yourselves. Considering how fast your world is changing, it's amazing you haven't blown yourselves to bits by now. That's why we don't want to write you off just yet. You humans have a certain talent for adaptability - at least in the short-term."
>
> (Carl Sagan, Contact, p. 360)

There are volumes available (large numbers of them) on the kind of education we should be providing to enable young people to be stronger, more skilful, more knowledgeable than ourselves. Just a few examples:

> "First, from Brian Maskell, in a paper presented to the New Zealand Educational Administration Society entitled "A Social Audit of Education" - in part, "a questioning of the extent to which resources - in all forms - are being managed efficiently and economically":
>
> "Acquisition of encyclopaedic knowledge as perceived and already known by others is not, in my view, a goal of education; yet nearly every adult asked the question "what is the goal of education?", would state, in effect, that the dead weight of encyclopaedic knowledge and its regurgitation for examinations arranged like a dependent series of slit windows in the avenue of development, is the name of the game. (Between the windows, the values system swallows the majority into a social compost).
>
> In my view, a positive goal of education should be to help with the process of learning in such a way that it is a medium for adventure and discovery that leaves the recipient with a sense of self-value in society and with both a unique perception of the world and the urge to go forward ibnto the unknown. Then our education system will begin to equip our society with people who will be able to face boldly the fast-changing futures towards which we are accelerating - instead of (quite rightly?) tearing our values system apart."
>
> Second, from Education and Ecstasy, a book concerned with human resources but not at all in the same accounting vein:

"Schools for What?

..To learn the commonly-agreed-upon skills and knowledge of the on-going culture (reading, writing, figuring, history and the like), to learn it joyfully and to learn that all of it, even the most sacred "fact" is strictly tentative.

...To learn how to ring creative changes on all that is currently agreed upon.

...To learn delight, not aggression; sharing, not eager acquisition; uniqueness, not narrow competition

...To learn how to enter and enjoy varying states of consciousness in preparation for a life of change.

...To learn how to explore and enjoy the infinite possibilities in relations between people, perhaps the most common form of ecstasy.

...To learn how to learn, for learning - one word that includes singing, dancing, interacting and much more - is already becoming the main purpose of life."

(from 'The School in N.Z. Society', N.Z.E.A.S. Journal)

## WHERE DO WE START?

In this section I shall attempt to suggest some specific ways of arresting the current wasting of human learning potential.

1. Encourage reform of all curricula to ensure that the central core of knowledge offered is helpful to our understanding of ourselves as individuals and as a species.

"Grice has spent his time reading. His prior education was largely designed to equip him for ruling, particularly to inculcate the conviction of superiority that in one way or another the administrators of Empire must have. Has has had no idea of all the richness of information available about his own species. You may ask how it is that, once equipped with so much information, the Volyens have not hastened to put it into useful practice, have not taught it to their young-just as Grice is asking. Probably when the historians get to work in this particular epoch, the time before the Volyen "Empire" falls to Sirius, this will be the fact they will single out as the most remarkable: with so much knowledge about the mechanisms that govern them as individuals, groups, conglomerates, why did they never use it? Well, they are a lethargic lot. With much-compartmented minds. "

(Doris Lessing 'Documents Relating to The Sentimental Agents in the Volyen Empire'. p.106)

2. Do not permit the banning of certain kinds of knowledge on the grounds that it is somehow 'dangerous to young minds.' Ignorance is dangerous. Poisonous propaganda and profit-producing pornography are dangerous, but information, informed concern, knowledge and skills are not. Encourage moral education - that is, the development of personal and shared beliefs about good and evil, and growth in the ability and willingness to take personal responsibility for the consequences of one's own behaviour.

   "Our notions of evil center round power and greed - taking from other people their food, their health, their liberty, their land, their customs, their pride. We don't find coupling bad unless it involves pain or is not invited."

   (Marge Piercy, Women on the Edge of Time . Women's Press Ltd, London 1979 rep. 1983. P. 139 Magdalena, the teacher)

3. Right the Balance. Where a society is the result of recent colonising processes (as in N.Z.) restore sovereignty to the indigenous people, enable them to reclaim their language and culture, and ensure that a just proportion of funding is made available to them to provide the kinds of education they want for their young people. The kind provided by the dominant groups is patently inadequate, in that it fails children from minority cultures (especially colonised indigenous people) and they have a right to the resources to do better.

   For other minority ethnic immigrant groups, provide funding for first language maintenance, additional English language teaching resources, and any other special programmes aimed at maintaining strong cultural patterns while participating effectively in the dominant culture.

   For the dominant group, implement clear anti-racist and anti-sexist policy guidelines, followed by funding for specific training programmes aimed at teaching anti-racist, anti-sexist, non-hierarchical, just behaviour, and at promoting positive enjoyment of cultural diversity.

   Where the education of girls or boys is inadequate, provide funding for change programmes based on the wealth of research showing how to improve it - for instance, in areas like technical, mathematical and scientific education for girls, communication and human relationships education for boys, and appreciation of our common humanity for both.

Teach all students about the present economic, industrial and political systems so that they understand ways in which social structures perpetuate inequality at present. Then they may at least have the choice of keeping or changing them.

"Unlike some, I do not believe that schools are to blame for the major ills of our society, but I do believe that schools have to share in that blame. I'm sure schools can't rectify all the injustices of our society either, but I do believe that they have an important part to play in seeing that past and present social injustices are righted."

(Wally Penetito, 'Taha Maori in Schools: Evolution, Revolution or Transformation', p.1)

4. Stress the importance of language and communication skills (including bilingualism as a minimum requirement for all students), mathematical understanding, sensitivity, cooperativeness, consensus-seeking, problem-solving, lateral and divergent thinking, aesthetic and technological skills and creativity. Provide evaluation of these skills. Give credit for them. Demand that any national system of evaluation and documentation includes them in pride of place. Most important of all, ensure that all methods of evaluation used are themselves consistent with the objectives to be evaluated, and that the emphasis is on measuring achievement, not ranking people.

5. Recognise that educational administrators have real power, (i.e. knowledge, skills, money, and resources), and therefore have the obligation to promote desirable change by using their power in ways consistent with the changes desired, that is, by consultation and by providing resources for change programmes - money, space, time allocations - and refraining from funding and supporting the maintaining of foolish or unjust or obsolete practices, e.g.
   - by withdrawing all funds from research on ranking mechanisms (whether evaluative or statistical) and funding only achievement-based evaluation research.
   - by providing no funds for the purchase of sexist or racist resource material, and spending instead on producing and sharing new resource materials.
   - by providing no time for in-service training on old styles of teaching or curriculum, and supporting instead any courses contributing to excellence, equity, and good evaluation.

6. Exemplify in our working relationships the basic principles of power-sharing. Accept that we all have areas of ignorance, and need each others' skills and knowledge. Behave as though we actually believe in the full humanity, dignity, and potential to contribute of all our colleagues and clients. Move beyond the concepts of 'quality circles' and 'think tanks' to the idea of the noosphere, the linking of human minds in a global network

of lovingly used knowledge and energy. Practise, and encourage in others, linking skills as well as analysing and disecting skills, cooperative work modes as well as striving and competing modes, feeling as well as thinking, caring for others and caring for self. Education for excellence equals education to transcend ourselves.

"They were nothing more than people by themselves. Even paired, any pairing, they would have been nothing more than people by themselves. But altogether, they have become the heart and muscles and mind of something perilous and new, something strange and growing and great. Together, all together, they are the instruments of change. "

(Keri Hulme, the bone people , p.4)

7. Invent new words when necessary: nonsense, niggling, numinous, noosphere, were all once new words. Don't be afraid of new words and structures, and don't be afraid to discard words and structures that are worn out, like racist metaphors and sexist language forms. New ideas often demand new language forms. If we can't name something (racism, kinetic energy) how can we control it? Imagine how the world might be different if our languages were different - "the limits of my language are the limits of my world" said Wittgenstein - and learn from the differences already existing in languages other than English - Maori, for instance; or Laadan:

"wohosheni : a word meaning the opposite of alienation: to feel joined to, part of someone or something without reservation or barriers.

wonewith : to be socially dyslexic : uncomprehending of the social signals of others

zhalaad : the act of relinquishing a cherished/comforting/ familiar illusion or frame of perception."

(Suzette Haden Elgin, Native Tongue p.303)

8. Have courage. It is the role of those of us who have power and privilege to have courage enough to change. Don't be afraid to admit errors, limitations. Don't be afraid to learn. If we can't, or won't, we will damage those who are trying to. We need to develop an awareness of our own self-esteem as being based on our learning to share power and join in creating new systems which are less wasteful, more just, and lovelier than the present. We need to link up with our colleagues in other networks - the media, the arts, health, social welfare, employment,

justice, environmental development - and plan our changes together. Speak out. Remember:

Fear arms. Courage disarms.

9. Above all, have vision, dream dreams.

"Where there is no vision the people perish" said the prophet.

If we don't have courage and vision we may build pyramids

- monuments to hierarchy - museums and mausoleums - but we won't weave wonders, a numinous noosphere - a womb for new worlds.

"It is the right of all people to dream dreams for themselves, believe in them, and make them a reality."

(Donna Awatere, Maori Sovereignty, p. 107)

Kia kaha, kia maia, kia manawanui.
Kia ora koutou.

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APPENDIX :

Suggested strategies for change in the Education system in Aotearoa:

as submitted to the Ministerial Enquiry into Curriculum and Examinations in the Senior School, and to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education and Science, in 1985-86.

STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

In order to bring about rapid, effective change in a system as massive as our state education system it is necessary to look at both effective techniques for educating participants in the system, and incentives for particular types of change.

A. TELEVISION

The most effective agency for widespread adult education - and, at present, the least used - is national television. I consider it absurd - almost obscene - that there is no regular programme on prime-time television concerned with the education of human beings. Are kiwifruit and pecan nuts, feral goats and the faithful Friesian, more important to our future than people-learning, that we enjoy a 15-minute per week Country Calendar and nothing, repeat nothing, about education? Such a programme could be of inestimable value in demystifying the learning process, encouraging innovation, giving recognition to change agents and conservationists, and providing information about learning opportunities available.

In addition to a regular education feature, I believe we need a special series of programmes aimed at changing the direction of our system from schooling for the status quo to education for future-shaping. it seems to me too difficult to try and change the whole system simultaneously, so it would seem sensible to choose particular target groups, and aim at substantial change within these groups in such a way that in time there would be a transformation of the system as a whole.

The first campaign could be called 'Learning to Learn', and could be aimed initially at parents and teachers of young children, showing how all children have a voracious capacity for acquiring new skills and knowledge, and stressing in particular the learning of basic language and mathematics skills. Careful use of working-class, female, Maori adults and children, and a wide range of others, would ensure the availability of role models: demystifying the learning process would have a profound effect on the relationships between schools and their communities.

Such a series would show teachers in classrooms demonstrating the best practices of success-oriented learning - but it would also show mothers, fathers, siblings, elders, shopkeepers and busdrivers as participants in the teaching - learning process. It could be one of the most magical, enchanting, delightful programmes ever made for television in New Zealand because if we showed the most exciting of all dramas - human minds unfolding, human behaviour changing, people-making - and because it would show us - not cardboard British or plastic American, but real people of Aotearoa.

The second campaign - which could run simultaneously, of course, or before or after the other - could be called 'What have you learnt?' and would be a thorough analysis of evaluation in education, from the informal comments of praise and encouragement in the infant classroom and from aunty to a new reader at home, to sophisticated testing techniques for determining levels

of achievement in advanced secondary-school mathematics or clinical practice in the medical school of the University. This programme series would be used to inform the public- including students and teachers - about the shift from summative to formative assessment and changes to the national system.

It will be clear that I see television as a critical influence in the educational process. It is nonsensical to assume it is an 'entertainment medium' without responsibility for education and social mores. Entertainment has, in fact, always been one of the main forms of social education - from wandering minstrels and waiata to historial novels and holograms, the arts have had a significant role in shaping the knowledge and values of human beings. Television just happens to be the most powerful art form yet developed, but we are not yet sufficiently aware of its educative power to ensure it is properly used. It is about time we were, and it was. It is probably the case that we do recognise its power, and the real issue is who controls that power, educators or financial manipulators - people concerned with the growth and welfare of other human beings, or people concerned with the profits that can be made through advertising. That is another whole issue which itself needs public debate on public television.

## D. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Apart from working with broadcasting media, and supplying appropriate printed materials for public information, the Department of Education has several very special responsibility for change.

1. The Department must itself model the social relationships and teaching/learning strategies which are expected of educational institutions. Therefore, as a matter of urgency, the Department should establish a Commission for Equity to undertake the kind of self-scrutiny happening in other government departments such as Social Welfare and Scientific and Industrial Research. Ideally, the Department of Education should lead in the areas of anti-racist and anti-sexist training, positive staff recruitment and training and promotion policies, provision of visual materials and resources which promote positive and diverse cultural models. It should also offer, at both national and regional levels, a model for the devolution of control over funding to groups which are presently under-represented and resourced, particularly the Maori people, and women.

2. The Department must exercise a greater leadership role in terms of formulating educational policies and monitoring the implementation of these policies. In particular, it should announce, and implement, the following strategies:

   . A challenging, through schools, teachers' colleges and universities in particular, but also as part of the wider publicity campaign, of the notion of the 'normal distribution curve of human abilities' or of learning outcomes, and a direct instruction to all teachers, examiners and inspectors to ensure that basic principles of success-oriented teaching and testing (as outlined by Bloom and others) are implemented throughout the system.

. A challenge to all schools, teachers' colleges, technical institutes and universities to write their own policies and programmes for bicultural development, sex equity, and proper support for people of every social group, and to develop staffing policies and instructional procedures consistent with those policies.

. Incentives to those groups taking up such challenges, in the form of in-service time and money for resource development, provided they submit worthwhile programmes of activity with evaluation and monitoring procedures built in. In particular, any school wishing to undertake a major restructuring of its services should be given a special entitlement of five teacher-only days over two years for this purpose.

. Incentives to those seeking classification as teachers, or applying for promotion within the service, that they must demonstrate in their classroom practice the principles of equity and success-oriented learning and evaluation, and (in terms of promotion) must show that they have undertaken appropriate additional in-service or extra-curricular training in these areas.

3. Evaluation, target setting and monitoring progress: If the personnel, time and energy, computer facility and resource funding at present used to service School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate and Higher School Certificate could be rechanneled into the definition and evaluation of achievement as suggested in the section on evaluation, it would be useful to combine the present 'Examinations Division' with some functions of the Research Division and develop a new 'evaluation and research section'. This would have the task of supporting all research and developmemnt functions of the education system - within schools, within the department itself, and internationally - and with coordinating a proper monitoring programme to ensure adequate progress towards the implementation of agreed policies.

## C. SCHOOLS

Because of the considerable degree of autonomy which schools have within our education system, there is a limit to what the Department of Education can achieve, even through policy instructions, monitoring, inspections, incentives and admonitions. Therefore, there needs to be a change to the Education Act which imposes on the governing bodies of schools (Education Boards, Boards of Governors) the requirements of progress towards social justice. In particular, these authorities should be required to:

. ensure that they adequately represent Maori people, and any other ethnic groups in their community, by coopting additional members or setting up special sub-committees in an advisory capacity.

. ensure that there is proper representation of women on all committees.

. develop staffing policies for schools which ensure the provision of strong role models of Maori people, women, and other cultural and social groups.

.establish strong and supportive procedures for dealing with complaints of racist or sexist language and behaviour, or harrassment.

. establish clear policies for improvement of school outcomes, to ensure that there is full discussion of any imbalances between race or gender groups, and action accordingly.

. be committed to success-oriented learning, and teaching and evaluation strategies which will ensure the highest possible level of development for all students.

. be committed to explaining to parents and communities the courses offered and methods of evaluation used, and to having an appeals committee of a representative nature to deal with any disputes over evaluation.

. be not permitted to legislate compulsory uniforms for all students, or to use force (e.g. corporal punishment) as a means of asserting control.

## D. UNIVERSITIES - TECHNICAL INSTITUTES AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES

A requirement should be placed on all tertiary establishments that 10 per cent or more of their annual budgets be used in ways which demonstrably enhance the educational outcomes of Maori people, women and other under-represented groups. If adequate documentation of such progress is not available at the end of the second year after the implementation of the requirement, funding for the future will be restricted in ways negotiated betwen the University Grants Committee and the University concerned, or the Department of Education and the Technical Institute concerned.

In order to ensure adequate representation of the Maori people and women on the governing authorities of tertiary establishments, changes to the relevant acts should be negotiated forthwith.

Technical Institutes and Community Colleges probably have, on the whole, better systems of achievement - based evaluation than any other section of the education system. Universities, on the other hand, must have the least-scrutinised and most nebulous practices of any sector. The University Grants Committee should be asked to scrutinise and monitor evaluation practices in the Universities, and to produce at least a quinquennial report on developments.

## E. ALTERNATIVES TO THE SYSTEM

In order to develop a full system of educative opportunities for all to achieve excellence in learning, it is important to acknowledge that institutions by their very nature cannot adequately meet the needs of all individuals. Therefore, in addition to formal state learning institutions, there will need to be informal or small-scale or simply 'special charactor' learning centres, which should, however, have the backing - and the scrutiny - of the Education Department.

In particular, as a matter of principle, where a particular ethnic or social group can demonstrate that their children are suffering an educational disadvantage in the state system, they should be entitled to withdraw their children and claim equivalent funding for alternative educational programmes. Present evidence would suggest that Maori and Pacific Island communities could claim such funding, as could centres for the mathematical and technical, scientific education of young women, or for the language and nurturing education of young men.

Similarly, schools which establish special programmes for disadvantage groups should be able to claim funding conditional upon proper monitoring of the effectiveness of such programmes.

## F. EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

One of the worst anomalies existing at present is that young people (16+) can be paid twice as much to be unemployed as they can to be full-time tertiary students, and can be paid nothing at all, at the same age, as full-time secondary students. A society which truly values learning will pay people more to learn than to do nothing.

Because it is clear that 'employment' as it existed during the growth phase of industrial capitalism is no longer an appropriate concept, it is important to establish a new pattern of relationship between 'learning' and 'earning' and 'working'.

The most logical development would seem to be a basic wage, payable to all people 15 or older provided they were engaged in private enterprise, community, or government-sponsored work, full-time education, or a combination of the two. More responsibility should be placed on the private sector, and neighbourhood, community, cultural and regional groups, for providing the funding for such projects, and for making the young people concerned accountable for both their 'working' and their 'learning'. Committees of students and staff within learning establishments could be the authorising bodies for such payments.

From the age of 13 - 15 it should be possible for any student to have a learning programme based partly in a school, and partly in a community or work place learning centre (e.g. a marae kokiri scheme, an industry traing course, a child-care centre education programme, access scheme) provided such arrangements are agreed to by the student, her/his family, the school and an officer of the Department of Education, and there is a proper provision of training and evaluation. From the age of 15 on, young people should be able to undertake part-time or full-time education, work or vocational training, with a salary as suggested earlier.

Protracting the period of neotony is no answer to changes in employment structures - it simply creates a larger hostile and underutilised group of young adults, with direct results in terms of crime and social disruption.